



CONSUMER AWARENESS

“Financial Readiness Means Mission Readiness”



Agenda

- ▶ **Terms and Definitions**
- ▶ **The Buying Decision**
- ▶ **Advertising**



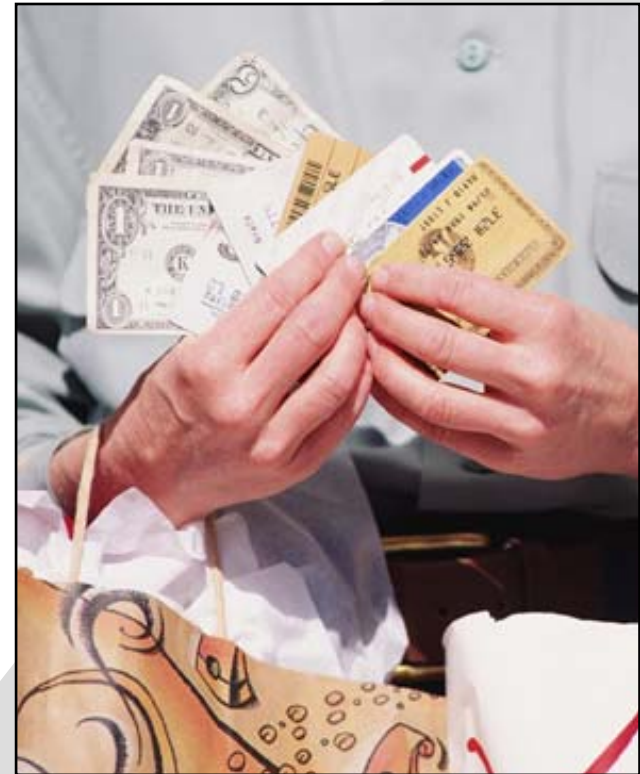
Agenda

- ▶ **Misrepresentation, Rip-Offs & Fraud**
- ▶ **Combat Strategies**
- ▶ **Consumer Laws and Rights**
- ▶ **How to Complain**
- ▶ **Sources of Help**



Key Terms

- ▶ **Fraud**
- ▶ **Rip-off**
- ▶ **Misrepresentation**





The Buying Decision

- ▶ **Purchasing is a matter of making choices**
 - ▶ **Wants versus needs**
 - ▶ **Brand name or generic**
 - ▶ **Save or spend**
 - ▶ **Which product fits your needs**



Military Issues

- ▶ **Military members are vulnerable!**
 - ▶ Often young
 - ▶ First time away from home
 - ▶ Uneducated consumers
 - ▶ Steady income
 - ▶ Impulse buyers



Advertising

- ▶ Informative
- ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Personalized
- ▶ Association
- ▶ Fear

“Just the facts ma’am”

“It’s the in thing”

“I want you for my customer”

“Be like me”

“You used brand X stuff again, didn’t you”



Advertising

► Buzz Words

“Online Resource”

“New & Improved!”

“Fat Free”

“1/3 More”

“Antibacterial”





Slogans

- Can you identify these marketing slogans?

“Use the card that pays you back”

“Get a piece of the rock”

“Have it your way”



Slogans

“Be all that you can be”

“Just do it”

“You’ve come a long way, baby”



Misrepresentations

- ▶ **Door-to-door sales**
- ▶ **Sweepstakes**
- ▶ **Contests, Free Gifts**
- ▶ **Unordered merchandise schemes**





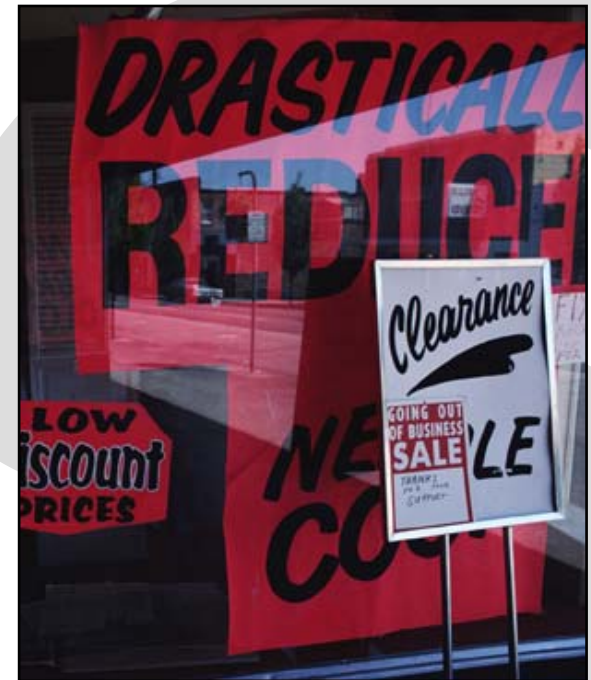
Rip-Offs

- ▶ **Free inspections**
- ▶ **Get rich quick deals**
- ▶ **Photo & buying clubs**
- ▶ **Title loan companies**
- ▶ **Work-at-home schemes**
- ▶ **Payday loans**



Fraud

- ▶ Auto repair frauds
- ▶ Identity theft
- ▶ Internet scams
- ▶ Ponzi/Pyramid schemes
- ▶ Bait and Switch
- ▶ Slamming & Cramming





Combat Strategies

- ▶ Learn advertising terms
- ▶ Be leery of misleading ads
- ▶ Carefully investigate “free” or “bargain” offers



Combat Strategies

- ▶ **Know what you can afford**
 - ▶ Needs vs wants
 - ▶ Prepare a spending plan





Combat Strategies

- ▶ **Know your product**
 - ▶ **Comparison shop**
 - ▶ **Check guarantee or warranty**





How to Purchase

- ▶ Ask questions
- ▶ Get it in writing
- ▶ Don't be rushed
- ▶ Sleep on it
- ▶ Have a business address
- ▶ Take action





How to Complain

- ▶ **Contact the business**
- ▶ **Keep a paper trail**
- ▶ **Contact**
 - ▶ **States Attorney General**
 - ▶ **State Office of Consumer Protection**
 - ▶ **Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board**
 - ▶ **Better Business Bureau**



How to Cancel a Contract

- ▶ In writing
- ▶ Keep a copy
- ▶ Send by certified mail
- ▶ Keep your copies until you are satisfied



Cooling-Off Periods

- ▶ **3 days:**
 - ▶ health club memberships
 - ▶ home improvements
 - ▶ telephone solicitation
 - ▶ door-to-door
- ▶ **7 days: campground membership**
- ▶ **10 days: timeshares**



Federal Consumer Protection Laws

- ▶ **Soldiers & Sailors Civil Relief Act**
- ▶ **Consumer Bill of Rights**
- ▶ **Fair Credit Billing Act**
- ▶ **State Consumer Protection**
 - ▶ **Lemon Laws**
 - ▶ **Usury Laws**



Sources of Help

- ▶ **First Sergeant**
- ▶ **Unit Financial Specialist**
- ▶ **Family Support Center**
- ▶ **Air Force Aid Society**
- ▶ **Legal Office**
- ▶ **Better Business Bureau**
- ▶ **Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board**